Who to call at the Office for the Aging

Do you ever wonder who to ask for when you call the Niagara County Office for the Aging? You can always call our main number, 438-4020, and ask who can best answer your question, or you can call the same number and ask for one of the people below. Also you can go to our web site at www.niagaracounty.com/aging.

- Director, Ken Genewick 438-4021
- Information and Assistance Program, Susan Christian 438-4023
- Health Insurance Counseling (HIICAP), Susan Christian 438-4023
- Expanded In-home Service to the Elderly Program (EISEP), Tim Sexton 438-4013 or 278-8612
- Legal Services, Gary Billingsley
- Home Delivered Meals, Sarah Lilley 438-4031
- Congregate Meal Program, Nutrition Education and Counseling, Glenda Reardon, RD, CDN 438-4030
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) 438-4016
- Weatherization, Referral and Packaging (WRAP), Tom Reilly 438-4036
- Caregiver Program, Nancy Smegelsky 438-4033
- Newsletter Editor, Nancy Smegelsky
- Medical Van, Jennifer Schumacher 438-4038
- NY Connects, 438-3030

Message from the Director

I hope this message finds you well and that you are enjoying our surprisingly mild winter! As this is the first newsletter of the year, I wanted to take this opportunity to point out several key changes to our office this year.

Firstly, we are very happy to have NY Connects part of our office once again for 2012. NY Connects will join the many valuable programs offered by the Office For the Aging and provide an important consumer-centered entry point for seniors aged 60 and older and individuals with disabilities of any age.

NY Connects will serve as our primary information source, offering information and assistance, education and screening to individuals, their families and/or caregivers to assist them in making informed choices regarding their long term care needs. It will make access to services easier to navigate for individuals. We are planning a promotional campaign to re-introduce NY Connects to the public, which will include print, radio, and television, so please watch for it and tell your friends!

Also, I want to announce a new suggested contribution rate schedule for the various programs we provide, which you will now find on the back page of this and future newsletters. As an area agency on aging, we are required to ask for contributions from clients of our various programs, should you want to contribute. Please note that any and all contributions are confidential and are directly used to fund Niagara County Office For the Aging programs.
I want to be clear that these are only suggested contributions, and that no one is required to pay for or would be denied service for their inability to pay. While our office greatly appreciates and relies on contributions to help offset our growing expenses, we appreciate the opportunity to serve you regardless of your ability to contribute.

I look forward to continuing our dialogue throughout the year on our initiatives and efforts to improve the lives and independence of seniors throughout the communities of Niagara County. Should you have any questions, or would like to learn more about our office, please give us a call at 438-4020.

Sincerely,
Ken Genewick
Director

SWEET POTATO WEDGES WITH ROSEMARY

Here is an interesting take on baked sweet potato "fries." Coat the wedges with a little soy sauce, which gives the potatoes nice color, and chili powder, which provides a little kick. A little fresh rosemary sprinkled on after baking offers a vibrant finish.

Serve the wedges hot, straight from the oven. In addition to being an interesting side dish, they make an unusual cocktail nibble.

Serves 6 to 8
3 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes (about 10 ounces each), scrubbed
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
1 1/2 teaspoons soy sauce, preferably Japanese tamari or shoyu
Freshly ground black pepper
1 heaping tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary

Set two racks in middle section of oven. Line two lipped baking sheets or large, shallow roasting pans with foil. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Halve potatoes crosswise (no need to peel). Cut each piece in half lengthwise. Then cut each piece into wedges about 1/2-inch thick. Sprinkle olive oil on top and stir to coat fries. Add soy sauce, chili powder, pepper and rosemary. (For less sodium, skip the soy sauce) Spread out on baking sheets. Bake about 15-20 minutes until easily pierced with a fork.

Note- to prepare this for one or two, simply use 1 or 2 sweet potatoes

Halt the Salt: The Buzz on Sodium

Salt is made up of two elements – about 40 percent sodium and 60 percent chloride. It’s the chloride that provides that familiar salty taste and the sodium that may negatively affect your health if you consume too much. While sodium is essential to live, we only need a few hundred milligrams per day. The average American, however, consumes 3,000 to 6,000 milligrams per day! This is far more than the current recommended amounts:

<2,300 mg sodium* for the healthy population
<1,500 mg sodium for the population with high blood pressure, related medical history, and/or African American descent

*One teaspoon of salt equals about 2,300 mg

Understanding Food Label Claims
Sodium/Salt Free = A trivial amount per serving
Very Low = 35 mg or less per serving
Low Sodium = 140 mg or less per serving
Reduced = Sodium levels reduced 25%
Light = Sodium levels reduced ≥ 50%

Note: Any food with more than 480 mg sodium per serving is considered a high-sodium food

Healthy Low Sodium Choices

Fresh fruits and vegetables
Fresh beef, veal, pork. Poultry, fish, eggs, low-salt deli meats
Unsalted popcorn, pretzels, tortilla or corn chips
To season: fresh or ground garlic and onion, curry, herbs (basil, thyme, rosemary, parsley), black pepper, lemon juice, vinegar, dry mustard, fresh or ground ginger, and Kosher salt instead of table salt.

Note: The amount of sodium per teaspoon of Kosher salt is smaller compared to a teaspoon of table salt because of its larger grain. This is also true of sea salt.

Cool Facts

✧ Lemon juice can aid in reducing the swelling caused by insect bites.
✧ About half of all Americans are on a diet on any given day.
✧ Enough beer is poured every Saturday across America to fill the Orange Bowl.
✧ According to research the most productive workday is Tuesday and the least productive is Friday.
✧ The Angel falls in Venezuela are nearly 20 times taller than Niagara Falls.
✧ Smiling releases endorphins in the body which makes people feel better.

It’s not too late to apply for HEAP…

HEAP is a federally funded program that may assist you with a one-time payment to your heating or utility company to assist with annual energy costs. The Niagara County Office for the Aging is still accepting HEAP applications for households with an individual at least 60 years of age or older. For more information or to see if the program is still open call 438-4016.

HIICAP News and Information

2012 Social Security Reminders

✧ Social Security’s 3.6% cost of living adjustment begins with payments in January 2012. Increased payments for SSI beneficiaries began December 30, 2011.
✧ The standard Part B monthly premium is $99.90 in 2012.

Medicare Part B General Enrollment Period

For people who did not enroll in Medicare Part B during their initial enrollment period at 65, the annual “general enrollment period” runs from January 1 to March 31, 2012. Coverage for people who enroll in Part B during this period will begin on July 1, 2012. Please note: Monthly premiums increase 10% for each 12 month period a person was eligible for, but did not enroll in, Medicare Part B.

Medicare Fraud and Medical Identity Theft Alert

✧ If you spot unusual medical charges, contact your doctor. It may just be a mistake.
If your complaint is not resolved, report the questionable charges to Medicare.
Phone: 1-800-633-4227 (1-800-MEDICARE)
TTY: 1-877-486-2048
Online: medicare.gov.

If you suspect Medicare Fraud, contact the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General Hotline.
Phone: 1-800-477-8477 (1-800-HHS-TIPS)
TTY: 1-800-377-4950
E-Mail: HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov
Online: OIG.HHS.gov/fraud/hotline.

If you think someone is misusing your personal information, contact the Federal Trade Commission’s Identity Theft Hotline.
Phone: 1-877-438-4338 (1-877-ID-THEFT)
TTY: 1-866-653-4261
Online: FTC.gov/idtheft

Caregiver Corner
Caregiving is a very important stage in life.

First Steps for Family Caregivers (www.nextstepincare.org)
Your Own Health. “Take care of yourself” is the most common advice you will get from professionals and friends. And it’s good advice. It’s just hard to get a good night’s sleep, eat healthy foods, exercise, and go to the doctor regularly when caregiving seems to take every minute of every day.

There is no answer that works for every caregiver. Try focusing on the one area that makes you feel most at risk. Seeing a doctor regularly and following his or her recommendations is most important if you have a chronic health problem. If you are generally healthy, but feeling seriously depressed, you need to consult a doctor or therapist.

When Caregiving Ends
In one sense, caregiving never ends. The experiences you have had – both good and bad - will stay with you forever. You may have been exhausted physically but gained a stronger spiritual awareness. You may have learned new skills, gained new self-respect, or found a new world of advocacy.

But of course, with the death of your family member, the day to day experience does end. Grief is natural. So is a sense of relief. Perhaps your family member’s last days were peaceful and dignified; if so, you can feel pride in having helped accomplish that through your care. If not, then you know that you did your best and can think about your

My Granddaughters asked me what it was like to be old.
So I told them “Put cotton in your ears and pebbles in your shoes.
Pull on rubber gloves.
Smear Vaseline over your glasses and there you have it: Instant Old Age.”
wishes if you were in a similar situation. Many former caregivers find that they miss not only the person they loved and cared for but also the caregiving itself. Some found caregiving rewarding and miss the satisfaction of knowing that they were making a difference in their family member’s life. Some became so committed to the daily routines that they don’t know how to cope with the emptiness. It is impossible to go back; it is hard to go forward.

How you cope with caregiving makes a difference. It will be easier to start whatever comes next if you were able to maintain a reasonable balance between caregiving and all other important parts of your live through caregiving.

This article is from the “Wyoming County Office for the Aging Senior Courier.”

Medicare Preventive Services 2012
Did you know these preventive services are covered by Medicare at 100% and are not subject to the Part B deductible.

1. Annual Depression Screening
2. Screening and Counseling for Alcohol Abuse
3. Annual Cardiovascular Disease Risk Reduction Visit
4. Screening and Counseling for Obesity

Talk to your primary care provider for more information.

Can Elderly Scams be Prevented?
Scam artists relentlessly prey on old people with money. Why are the elderly more susceptible and more likely to become victims of a scam? The elderly are vulnerable because they tend to be too trusting, gullible, live alone and don’t have someone watching over their finances. Loneliness also plays a role. Elders are often grateful to have someone to talk to—not suspecting that the “nice man” on the phone may be preying on them.

Caregivers can take some steps and identify red flags to help protect their loved ones from fraud or scam artists.

◊ Get involved with a senior’s financial decisions as much as possible, especially when managing personal finances has become a burden.

◊ Never allow your elderly parent to give out personal banking information, credit card numbers or social security numbers.

◊ Visit the homes of elderly relatives regularly. Ask about phone calls and watch for full mailbox. A large volume of mail could mean a person is on a “Sucker list”.

◊ Tell your parent never to hire someone who shows up at the door and tells them their house needs repair.

◊ Tell your loved one never to make “on the spot” decisions.

Fraud against an older person is a serious problem affecting thousands every year. These tips can help prevent a senior from falling victim to scams.
They have the choice to live independently.

You have the choice to help them do it.

We have the information to help.

The Downsizing Challenge

By Pat Walker from Cortland Co. OFA

During the past year it has become very apparent to me that I have too much stuff. There are people in this world whose earthly possessions can be placed on the back of a camel. I have a large home with piles on the floor because there is no more closet or drawer space. I’m not a hoarder. Everything I have is useful. But much of what I have hasn’t been used in a long time.

A couple of years ago I visited Acacia Village, an independent retirement living facility near Utica. I brought home a packet of information which included a plan for downsizing called Moving Matters: The Twelve Months of Moving. At the time I thought it would be a great idea for cleaning out excess possessions and put it away in a safe place to refer to in the future. Well, I have yet to find that safe place.

First we need a plan on what we are going to do with the stuff that we don’t need. Here are some options:

- Give it away.

  If it has heirloom value, gift it to a family member or friend that would appreciate it. I started giving away family heirlooms as wedding gifts along with a note telling who originally owned the piece or a story of why it was important to the family.

  If the piece does not have keepsake value but might be of use to your family or friends, send out an email...
that goes to the first to respond.  
I’ve given a new home to a lot of items using that method.

- Throw it out. It’s okay. If it is battered, torn or just not useful to anyone else, just throw it out.

According to Moving Matters, in January we sort shoes, and in February we sort purses. At first, I thought it would be an easy start to me, but then I actually got into the closet and the excuses of why I should save the shoes or purse started flying.

Moving Matters suggests that you get rid of shoes you haven’t worn in a year and purses you haven’t used in two years. Ladies, we need a summer purse, a winter purse and a basic fancy purse. Get rid of the purse with the broken strap! Get rid of the shoes you have worn so long that the sole has a hole in it. I know what is in your closet...I have those same shoes and purses in mine! Out they go!!

(I realize we are already through January and February but I am going to give this a try to get rid of stuff in my own house. Let me know if you have any success. Nancy Smegelsky, editor)

They Ask Why I Like Retirement!!!

Question: How many days is a week?  
Answer: 6 Saturdays, 1 Sunday

Question: What’s the biggest gripe of retirees?  
Answer: There is not enough time to get everything done.

Question: Why don’t retirees mind being called seniors?  
Answer: The term comes with a 10% discount.

Question: What is the common term for someone who enjoys work and refuses to retire?  
Answer: NUTS!!!

Question: Why are retirees so slow to clean out the basement, attic or garage?  
Answer: They know that as soon as they do, one of their adult kids will want to store stuff there.

Question: What’s the biggest advantage of going back to school as a retiree?  
Answer: If you cut classes, no one calls your parents.

Question: What do you do all week?  
Answer: Monday through Friday, NOTHING….Saturday & Sunday, I rest.

We are seeking volunteers across Niagara County especially Niagara Falls. Our home delivered meal volunteers make a difference in so many people’s lives. Bringing a hot meal to someone in need as well as making new friends and social contacts is extremely rewarding. If anyone is interested in learning more about either of these opportunities or would like to receive meals please contact Sarah Lilley or Mary Lewis at 438-4031.
**Niagara County Contribution Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTION RATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congregate Meals</td>
<td>$3.00 per meal age 60+ *</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$4.00 charge under age 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Delivered Meals</td>
<td>$3.00 per meal age 60+</td>
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<td>$4.00 charge under age 60+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homecare/Personal Care</td>
<td>$20.00 per month</td>
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<td>Social Adult Day Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Emergency Response Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Insurance Counseling</td>
<td>$10.00 per session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Service</td>
<td>$20.00 per consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation Services</td>
<td>$7.00 roundtrip Within City of residence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$10.00 roundtrip Within County</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$25.00 round trip – Out of County</td>
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* Includes individuals under 60 if the spouse of a senior 60+, or disabled resident residing in a housing center that is a designated congregate meal site.

These contribution rates have been established by the Niagara County Office for the Aging Advisory Council.

These rates are only suggested contribution amounts. No one will be denied service if they cannot contribute. All contributions are voluntary and confidential. Checks can be made out to the Niagara County Office for the Aging and mailed to our office at 111 Main Street, Suite 101, Lockport, NY 14094. Please indicate the program you are contributing to when submitting.

All contributions received will be used to pay for program costs. We thank you for your understanding the importance of your contribution, which helps us continue valuable services to Niagara County residents.
Seeking Nominations for Senior of the Year

The Niagara County Office for the Aging is seeking out nominations for Niagara County Senior Citizen of the Year. Each year our office recognizes a senior who is an integral part of our community, giving back to and serving fellow residents of all ages.

The qualifications are simple. Anyone who is a Niagara County resident and is at least 60 years of age is eligible, and anyone can nominate them. If you would like to submit a nomination, please complete the attached form and return it to Niagara County Office for the Aging, 111 Main Street, Suite 101, Lockport, NY 14094 by Friday March 30th.

All nominees will be reviewed and the winner will be selected by our Advisory Board. The winner will be recognized by the Niagara County Legislature during a legislative meeting to Celebrate May as being Older American’s Month.

We look forward to receiving your nomination for Niagara County Senior Citizen of the Year.

Thank you,

Ken Genewick
Director
Niagara County Office for the Aging
Who is eligible to receive the award?
Any Niagara County resident aged 60 years or older.

What are the criteria for the award?
Outstanding citizenship, as demonstrated by positive acts in service to one’s fellow citizens, especially in service directly to one’s fellow Niagara County residents.

Name of nominee: ____________________________________________

Name/telephone number of nominating person or group: ____________________________________________

I/we believe the above named nominee should receive the 2012 Niagara County OFA Senior Citizen of the Year award because (attach additional sheets as needed):

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________